More Resources Needed to End the HIV Pandemic

Despite progress on biomedical prevention and treatment, social issues are proving more difficult to resolve.

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In advance of the International AIDS Conference, UNAIDS released its annual report, “The Urgency of Now: AIDS at a Crossroads.” According to the report, in 2023, 39.9 million people were living with HIV worldwide, and there were 1.3 million new infections and 630,000 AIDS-related deaths. While deaths have dropped by more than half over the past decade, one person still dies of HIV-related causes every minute.

Nearly 30.7 million people with HIV are on antiretroviral therapy, but that still leaves 9.3 million without treatment. UNAIDS estimates that in 2023, 86% of people with HIV knew their status, 89% of people diagnosed were on treatment and 93% of those had viral suppression. The global 95-95-95 targets call for all three metrics to reach 95% by 2030.

A study presented at the conference showed that rapidly scaling up the global HIV response could avert nearly 35 million new infections and prevent nearly 18 million deaths between now and 2050, but inadequate funding is a concern. At the end of 2023, $19.8 billion was available for the global response—about $9.5 billion less than needed.

Despite progress on biomedical prevention and treatment, social issues—including a growing backlash against LGBTQ and women’s rights—are proving more difficult to resolve. “We have to tackle the discrimination and stigma that are pushing the most marginalized people away from lifesaving services,” says UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima.

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